



# COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS,

## LABOUR TURNOVER, SEPTEMBER, 1954

This report gives the results of a survey of labour turnover in Australian industry in September, 1954, and compares these results with those obtained in similar earlier surveys. These surveys have been made on the basis of a representative sample of private businesses subject to payroll tax, other than private domestic service and those engaged in rural industries. Governments, most governmental business undertakings, and small employers not subject to tax are excluded. In addition, shipping and stevedoring industries have been excluded from the results presented herein because of statistical difficulties associated with the employment of casual labour.

Labour turnover is frequently measured by the number of engagements or separations (whichever is the lower) expressed as a percentage of average employment during the period under review. Table 1 below shows figures of both engagements and separations expressed as percentages in this way, the results of the latest survey being compared with those of similar surveys carried out in 1949, 1950, 1952 and 1953. "Separations" include dismissals and retrenchments as well as numbers of persons who leave of their own volition and a dissection of separations into these classes is given in Table 3.

The period covered in individual returns was not uniform, depending as it did on the dates on which payroll tax returns of individual businesses were made up in respect of August and September. The figures should be interpreted as applying to an average of about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  weeks. In interpreting the figures the possible effect of seasonal fluctuations should be kept in mind. The surveys from 1949 to 1953 refer to the month of March, while that for 1954 refers to the month of September. For this reason comparison between figures for 1954 and earlier years in the food industry is particularly affected and other industries may be affected to a minor extent.

TABLE 1 : LABOUR TURNOVER, 1949 - 1954  
(Engagements and separations as percentage of average number  
of employees in each group)

	Manufacturing		Other Industries (a)		All Industries (a)	
	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>MALES</b>						
Engagements						
March, 1949	9.3	1.8	8.1	3.5	8.9	3.0
March, 1950	8.4	2.2	7.3	2.8	8.0	2.6
March, 1952	6.0	1.9	6.5	2.6	6.2	2.4
March, 1953	4.7	1.6	4.8	2.1	4.8	1.9
September, 1954	6.6	2.2	7.5	2.2	6.9	2.2
Separations						
March, 1949	8.5	1.4	7.1	2.8	8.0	2.3
March, 1950	8.7	1.6	7.5	2.4	8.3	2.1
March, 1952	7.0	1.9	6.9	2.6	7.0	2.4
March, 1953	4.2	1.6	4.2	2.7	4.2	2.3
September, 1954	6.0	1.7	6.9	2.1	6.3	2.0
<b>FEMALES</b>						
Engagements						
March, 1949	11.0	3.9	9.8	9.9	10.7	8.5
March, 1950	10.5	4.8	12.1	5.8	11.0	5.6
March, 1952	6.4	4.0	8.1	5.5	6.8	5.1
March, 1953	9.0	4.0	7.3	5.8	8.5	5.4
September, 1954	7.0	4.1	6.0	5.3	6.8	5.0
Separations						
March, 1949	8.9	3.4	9.4	8.2	9.0	7.1
March, 1950	8.6	4.4	11.0	5.7	9.3	5.3
March, 1952	9.7	4.2	9.9	5.8	9.7	5.4
March, 1953	6.1	3.2	4.9	4.6	5.8	4.3
September, 1954	6.6	3.7	5.0	4.2	6.2	4.1

(a) See introductory text for note on industry coverage.



For male manual workers, comparison of September, 1954 with March, 1953 shows that the downward trend in engagements and separations ceased and turnover increased in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries. Among male non-manual workers the separation rates in non-manufacturing industries was substantially lower in September, 1954 than in March, 1953. With this exception changes in turnover rates among male non-manual workers followed the same general patterns in this period as those for manual workers, although turnover among non-manual workers was considerably less than among manual workers.

Among female employees there was not the same well-defined tendency for turnover rates to rise. In manufacturing industries separations were higher but engagements of manual workers were considerably lower. In non-manufacturing industries engagements were lower in March, 1954 than in any previous survey.

Separation rates among manual workers, though higher than in March, 1953, were for all groups shown in the table lower than in March, 1949 and 1950, and with one exception, lower than in March, 1952. As is shown in more detail later, the recent increase in the separation rates for manual workers is due to an increase in the number of employees leaving of their own accord. Retrenchments which had been comparatively high in March, 1952 - particularly for women - had fallen considerably by March, 1953 and were still lower in September, 1954.

Table 2 shows separation rates for manual workers in individual industries.

TABLE 2 : PERCENTAGE SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY, 1949-1954

(Percentage of average number of employees :  
March, 1949-1953, September, 1954)

	Males					Females				
	March 1949	March 1950	March 1952	March 1953	Sept. 1954	March 1949	March 1950	March 1952	March 1953	Sept. 1954
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	8.1	7.4	6.3	4.2	6.2	11.6	12.1	10.8	4.9	7.5
Textiles	9.1	9.2	9.1	2.5	5.9	9.1	7.1	9.0	3.8	5.5
Clothing	5.0	6.3	8.5	3.9	5.1	5.0	5.8	9.5	6.0	6.8
Food, Drink, Tobacco	10.2	13.0	8.8	6.3	5.8	21.7	13.7	9.2	10.4	7.8
Furniture, sawmilling and woodworking	11.6	9.9	7.0	3.5	6.1	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Paper, printing	4.5	4.8	3.8	1.3	3.0	6.6	9.3	10.4	3.8	6.3
Other manufacturing	8.3	8.5	7.7	3.8	7.0	7.5	13.2	10.5	5.1	4.8
All Manufacturing	8.5	8.7	7.0	4.2	6.0	8.9	8.6	9.7	6.1	6.6
Mining	3.4	4.1	2.7	1.9	2.5	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Building	10.7	8.4	10.9	6.4	10.4	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Road Transport	6.7	7.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Wholesale Trade	5.6	8.1	5.4	4.7	7.1	4.9	6.7	5.4	4.4	7.0
Retail Trade	5.1	5.6	4.8	2.7	5.4	5.5	6.3	7.9	2.8	4.8
All Other (a)	9.6	10.4	9.7	3.7	8.9	11.1	13.4	11.4	5.9	4.7
All Industries (a)	8.0	8.3	7.0	4.2	6.3	9.0	9.3	9.7	5.8	6.2

(a) See introductory text for note on industrial coverage. (b) Included with "all other". (c) Included with "other manufacturing".

An increase in separation rates for manual workers between March, 1953 and September, 1954, occurred in practically all industrial groups. The major exception was the food, drink and tobacco manufacturing industry in which separation rates for both males and females was lower in September, 1954. This decline in the separation rates for the food, drink and tobacco industry is doubtless very strongly influenced by seasonal factors entailed in the different dating of the surveys. The only other exceptions are that separation rates for females in "other manufacturing" and "all other" industries, were slightly lower in September, 1954.

Separation rates for males in the paper and printing industry have consistently been the lowest in the manufacturing group. Separation rates for females in most industries in the manufacturing group are higher than for males.



## SEPARATION RATES BY CLASS OF SEPARATION

In these surveys separations have been classified by type of separation (dismissed, retrenched, left and other). Businesses submitting returns were asked to class employees as "dismissed" where employment was terminated on the employer's initiative for disciplinary or other reasons; as "retrenched" where the employment was terminated, permanently or otherwise, on the employer's initiative for reasons such as a reduction in the scale of operations, breakdown in machinery, shortage of materials, etc.; as "left" where employment was terminated on the employee's initiative; and as "other" where the separation was due to death, injury, permanent retirement (including women leaving to be married) enlistment in the forces or other reasons.

Table 3 shows for male and female workers, an analysis of separations in March, 1953 and September, 1954, in the main industry groups. Similar information for March, 1950, and March, 1952 can be obtained from the reports on Quarterly Surveys No. 20 and No. 24.

**TABLE 3 : ANALYSIS OF SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS, MARCH, 1953  
AND SEPTEMBER, 1954**

(Percentage of average employment in each group)

	March, 1953					September, 1954				
	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL
<b>MALES</b>										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.6	1.0	2.5	0.1	4.2	0.6	0.2	5.3	0.1	6.2
Textile	0.3	0.2	1.9	0.1	2.5	0.5	0.4	4.8	0.1	5.9
Clothing	0.5	0.3	3.0	0.1	3.9	0.6	0.4	4.0	0.2	5.1
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.6	4.1	1.5	0.1	6.3	0.7	0.9	4.2	0.1	5.8
Furniture, Woodworking	0.5	0.5	2.3	0.2	3.5	0.5	0.1	5.3	0.2	6.1
Paper, printing	0.1	0.2	0.9	0.1	1.3	0.3	-	2.6	0.1	3.1
Other manufacturing	0.7	0.9	2.1	0.1	3.8	1.1	0.7	5.0	0.2	7.0
All manufacturing	0.6	1.3	2.2	0.1	4.2	0.7	0.4	4.8	0.1	6.0
Mining	0.1	-	1.6	0.2	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.4	-	0.6
Building	1.7	1.0	3.7	-	6.4	1.2	2.0	6.8	0.5	10.4
Road Transport	0.5	0.3	3.0	0.3	4.1	1.6	0.1	2.4	-	4.1
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.6	1.0	2.2	0.2	4.0	1.1	0.5	4.9	0.2	6.7
Other Industries	0.8	0.4	1.8	0.7	3.7	0.5	0.1	4.9	0.4	5.9
All Industries	0.6	1.1	2.3	0.2	4.2	0.8	0.6	4.7	0.2	6.3
<b>FEMALES</b>										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.5	0.7	3.6	0.1	4.9	0.5	0.3	6.5	0.3	7.5
Textile	0.3	0.1	3.2	0.2	3.8	0.4	0.4	4.6	0.2	5.5
Clothing	1.8	0.4	3.4	0.4	6.0	2.1	-	4.4	0.2	6.8
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.7	4.8	4.8	0.1	10.4	0.6	0.9	6.3	0.1	7.8
Paper, printing	0.4	0.5	2.7	0.2	3.8	0.6	-	5.6	0.1	6.3
Other manufacturing	1.0	0.4	3.7	-	5.1	0.6	0.6	3.3	0.3	4.8
All manufacturing	1.1	1.2	3.6	0.2	6.1	1.2	0.3	4.9	0.2	6.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.8	0.6	1.6	0.3	3.3	1.0	-	4.6	0.1	5.7
Other Industries	1.2	-	4.7	-	5.9	0.6	-	4.1	-	4.7
All Industries	1.1	0.9	3.6	0.2	5.8	1.1	0.2	4.7	0.2	6.2

(D. Dismissed; R. Retrenched; L. Left; O. Other Reasons)



Between March, 1953 and September, 1954, the percentages of both male and female manual workers who left their job of their own accord rose significantly. Nearly all industrial groups showed an increase. On the other hand most groups recorded a decline in the rate of retrenchments during this period. The percentage of dismissals and "other" separations remained approximately the same as in March, 1953.

The influence of seasonal factors is reflected in the high rate of retrenchments in the food, drink and tobacco manufacturing industries in March, 1953 and in earlier years not shown in the table. If this factor be allowed for, it is apparent from the increase in the number of employees who left, that this group has also been experiencing the general trend toward a higher rate of labour turnover.

TABLE 3: ANALYSIS OF SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS, MARCH, 1953 AND SEPTEMBER, 1954  
(Percentage of average employment in each group)

		March, 1953				September, 1954					
		P.	H.	L.	O.	TOTAL	P.	H.	L.	O.	TOTAL
MALES											
COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS											
CANBERRA, A.C.T.		1ST MARCH, 1955									
Manufacturing -		0.6	1.1	2.3	0.2	4.2	0.8	0.6	4.7	0.2	5.3
Engineering,		0.3	0.2	1.9	0.1	2.5	0.5	0.4	4.8	0.1	5.8
Vehicles, etc.		0.5	0.3	3.0	0.1	3.9	0.6	0.4	4.0	0.2	5.1
Textile		0.6	4.1	1.5	0.1	6.3	0.7	0.9	4.3	0.1	5.8
Clothing		0.5	0.2	2.3	0.2	3.2	0.5	0.1	2.3	0.2	3.1
Food, Drink, Tobacco		0.4	0.2	0.9	0.1	1.6	0.3	0.3	2.6	0.1	3.7
Furniture, Woodworking		0.7	0.9	2.1	0.1	3.8	1.1	0.7	2.0	0.2	3.9
Paper, printing		0.6	1.3	2.2	0.1	4.2	0.7	0.4	4.8	0.1	6.0
Other manufacturing		0.1	-	1.6	0.5	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.4	-	0.6
All manufacturing		1.7	1.0	3.7	-	6.4	1.5	2.0	6.8	0.5	10.4
Mining		0.5	0.3	3.0	0.3	4.1	1.6	0.1	2.4	-	4.1
Holding		0.6	1.0	2.2	0.2	4.0	1.1	0.5	4.9	0.2	6.7
Road Transport		0.8	0.4	1.8	0.7	3.7	0.5	0.1	4.9	0.4	5.8
Wholesale and Retail		0.6	1.0	2.2	0.2	4.0	1.1	0.5	4.9	0.2	6.7
Trade		0.8	0.4	1.8	0.7	3.7	0.5	0.1	4.9	0.4	5.8
Other Industries		0.6	1.1	2.3	0.2	4.2	0.8	0.6	4.7	0.2	5.3
All Industries											

<b>FEMALES</b>											
		1.1	0.9	3.6	0.2	5.8	1.1	0.2	4.7	0.2	6.2
All Industries		1.2	-	4.7	-	5.9	0.6	-	4.1	-	4.7
Trade		0.8	0.6	1.6	0.3	3.3	1.0	-	4.6	0.1	5.7
Wholesale and Retail		1.1	1.2	3.6	0.2	6.1	1.2	0.3	4.9	0.2	6.6
All manufacturing		1.8	0.4	2.7	-	5.1	0.6	0.6	3.8	0.2	4.8
Other manufacturing		0.4	0.2	2.7	0.2	3.8	0.6	-	2.8	0.1	3.3
Paper, printing		0.7	4.8	4.8	0.1	10.4	0.6	0.9	6.3	0.1	7.8
Food, Drink, Tobacco		1.8	0.4	3.4	0.4	6.0	2.1	-	4.4	0.2	6.8
Clothing		0.3	0.1	3.5	0.2	3.8	0.4	0.4	4.6	0.2	5.5
Textile		0.5	0.7	0.7	0.5	4.9	0.5	0.3	6.5	0.3	7.5
Engineering		0.5	0.7	0.7	0.5	4.9	0.5	0.3	6.5	0.3	7.5
Manufacturing -		0.5	0.7	0.7	0.5	4.9	0.5	0.3	6.5	0.3	7.5

(D. Dismissed; R. Retrenched; L. Left; O. Other Reasons)